

ERSWORTH, S. G.

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Molash Vicarage, by Ashford
Kent. January 2^d 1877.

My very dear Friend.

The completed first volume
of my "Bafford Ballads" awaits
your return to Maidenhead.

And here I send one additional
and Tributary Ballad as a sign
of welcome to the most loyal as
well as the oldest of Shakespearian
Commentators and Editors.

I was not forgetting to count
the days intervening before the
11th returns. May it find you in
health and happiness. God bless you.

Thanks for your letter received
this morning. I despatched my
first "clean" copies of the
later sheets of Bagford Bds. yesterday,
hoping (as it will turn out to be)
that they might arrive in time
to greet your return home.

Other sheets will follow with
little delay, for we have a good
deal set up of vol. IInd, and I
have got a "big lot" of Ms.
introductions and texts despatched
into the printers' hands.

We are well and happy - my wife
and I. Yesterday I had the pleasure
of giving a Tea-party at Melash
School to all the womenkind of
the Parish - ending up with Music.
This I have done every New Year's
day, and at close of Harvest.
And we have a similar Music.

Night (always grates) every month.

I give readings to diversify the
entertainment: but of late I have

found it more successful to reproduce
without book the subjects I select.

My memory is good, better than
my (fading) eyesight, and I have
more command of their attention
by this means. It is for the

Same reason that I now always
preach extempore - by (half-unwilling)
"choir".

We have had such wet weather
here, until to-day, that I fear
you have been closely confined to
the house. But this, with a happy
family and young folks around
you, would not be hard to bear
in December.

My dear wife (your Hannah
admires) unites with me in
every good wish - including (if
she will permit me) your own
long daughter. Those who are
dear to you, must needs be dear
to us.

Ever faithfully and affectionately
yours, Woodfall Sturges.

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New-Year, 1877.

COME Cheer up, my Muse, and pay us your dues,
A Verse to **Payne Collier** you cannot refuse:
He's been holiday-making, at **Epsom** to roam,
Then sing a blithe **Carol** to welcome him home.
Chorus: Welcome him home! Welcome him home!
A hearty **New-Year's Ode** to welcome him home.

What a life of sound labour, untiring, he's spent!
With his warm loving heart full of honest content;
Giving help where 'twas wanted, and cheering us on
By the sight of him honour'd for good work well done.
So welcome him home! welcome him home!
Back again to his **Proof-Sheets**, we welcome him
home.

The envious may carp, and the spiteful may rail,
But our own love for **J.P.C.** never can fail.
He goes on with his work, smiling gaily the while,
Let them yelp all the more, all the more he will smile.
Then welcome him home! welcome him home!
In his **Sanctum** secure, we will welcome
him home.

Will. Shakespeare (if Spirits can know what is done
In this world of their youth, where their brief race was run)
Well knows and well loves all the labours that still
From our *Nonagenarian* thus honours "Sweet Will."

He'll welcome him home, welcome him home;
The Swan to his Riverside welcomes him home.

And *Spenser*, less social of habit, will lend
From his Garland some flowers to greet his old friend;
Whose stout yeoman's-service was long ago seen
To honour the Laureate of his *Faerie Queene*:

She welcomes him home, she welcomes him home;
Colin Clout and fair *Una* will welcome him home.

See they stand on his threshold, the jolly old *Bards*,
With a clasp of good Fellowship showing regards;
Saying, Here where our Books are, our Spirits are come,
Elizabeth's Poets; we welcome you home!

Welcome you home, welcome you home;
Long, long may your *Happiness* welcome you home.

January 15th 1877.

J.W. Ebsworth.

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